



[Wampanoag](#)

Origin of Family, Property and State

The previous post introduced [Chapter 32 of Karl Marx's "Capital", Volume 1](#). It is a typically sweeping overview of history, placed at the end of Marx's long book as a summary, and the one before that was from "The Prince", by Machiavelli.

Both Machiavelli and Marx were familiar with the history of "the ancients", and especially with the literature of the Greeks and the Romans. These ancients often wrote in

similarly sweeping terms. They were humanists and generalists and not narrow-minded specialists. They were philosophers in the broad sense of the word: people who sought wisdom of all kinds, and the essence of wisdom itself.

With today's item, and once again to support the kind of historical view that Machiavelli brought back into modern historiography, and into literature, we have Chapter 9 of Frederick Engels' ["The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"](#) (download linked below).

We will return to "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" later in this Basics course when we are dealing more specifically with the State, and we will return to it again when we deal with the CU course called ["No Woman, No Revolution"](#).

This is because the rise of property, and the State that secured property and created class-division, was also the cause of the fall of the women in human society.

Please ignore the first three paragraphs of today's given chapter. These paragraphs only refer back to earlier chapters in the book. From the fourth paragraph onwards what you will find is a short history of human society from its beginning right up to modern times.

In the literature of Marx and Engels, as in the literature of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and as in Machiavelli,

there is a constant sense of history on a grand scale, or what is sometimes called a “grand narrative” of human life, which may then be projected into the future.

Engels was a pioneer in the field of prehistory - the study of the time in the development of human culture before the appearance of the written word - as he was in many other fields of learning. His ideas on prehistory, based also on work done by [Henry Morgan](#) and then by Karl Marx, have stood the test of time.

Marx had recently died when Engels wrote this book. It is based to a considerable extent on papers left by Marx. Hence the book is both a posthumous collaboration, and also a tribute to Marx by Engels.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Origin of Family, Private Property and State, C9, Engels](#).
- A PDF file of the reading text is attached
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).